

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 13331 252353Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00  
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 PA-01  
PRS-01 USIA-06 NSC-05 SS-15 TRSE-00 DHA-05 /064 W  
-----061504 260003Z /66

R 250721Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4215

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, EAIR, RP

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: PRESIDENT MARCOS LIFTS TRAVEL BAN

REF: MANILA 13106

1. THREE DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT MARCOS ANNOUNCED THE TERMINATION OF THE TRAVEL BAN IN HIS SPEECH OPENING THE EIGHT WORLD LAW CONFERENCE (REFTEL), THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION OF WHAT HE MEANT AND HOW HIS DECISION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED. HE HAD QUALIFIED THE ANNOUNCEMENT, SAYING THAT THE TERMINATION IS EXPERIMENTAL AND THE BAN COULD BE REIMPOSED. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL WOULD DRAW UP IMPLEMENTING RULES.

2. THE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED AS PART OF THE "OPEN SKIES" POLICY SO OFTEN ANNOUNCED BUT EVER SO MUCH GROUNDED. IN THEORY, FREE TRAVEL WOULD MEAN ADDITIONAL OUTGOING PASSENGERS FOR THE FOREIGN AIRLINES WHICH WILL THEN PUT ON ADDITIONAL FREQUENCIES TO BRING IN MORE TOURISTS FOR THE EMPTY HOTELS IN MANILA.

3. FREE TRAVEL, HOWEVER, IS STILL UP IN THE AIR AS THE COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL IS STRUGGLING WITH THE DRAFTING OF IM-

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PAGE 02 MANILA 13331 252353Z

LEMENTING RULES. THIS COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COLLANTES HAS HELD A VETO OVER THE TRAVEL OF FILIPINOS THROUGH ITS ISSUANCE OF EXIT VISAS. THERE ARE STORIES THAT ONE CAN OBTAIN AN EXIT VISA BY PAYING 2,500 PESOS FOR THE SERVICE. TRAVEL AGENTS ASK UP TO 4,000 PESOS. A FAVORITE GUESSING GAME, ACCORDING TO A SENIOR CENTRAL BANK OFFICIAL, IS HOW MUCH AND HOW FAR UP IN THE

GOVERNMENT THE GREASE GOES.

4. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS MARKET FOR PASSPORTS AND EXIT VISAS HAS ENGAGED THE ATTENTION OF SECRETARY OF FINANCE VIRATA, WHO IS CONCERNED OVER THE OUTFLOW OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE. OFFICIALLY-RECORDED FOREIGN EXCHANGE COSTS AT PRESENT CONSIST OF ABOUT \$20 TO \$30 MILLION EXPENSES ABROAD AND AN EQUIVALENT AMOUNT FOR TRANSPORTATION ON FOREIGN AIRLINES. UNCONDITIONALLY LIFTING THE TRAVEL BAN WOULD RESULT IN HIGH INCREASE IN OUTFLOWS THE FIRST YEAR BECAUSE OF PENT-UP DEMAND, BUT TRAVEL EXPENDITURES WOULD THEN DECREASE SOMEWHAT AND STABILIZE. ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS, OF UNDETERMINED MAGNITUDE, ARE NOT OFFICIALLY RECORDED. VIRATA'S PET PROJECT, SINCE THE IMPOSITION OF THE TRAVEL BAN IN 1972, IS TO INCREASE THE TRAVEL TAX WHICH IS NOW 250 TO 400 PESOS, DEPENDING ON TICKET PRICE. ONE NEWSPAPER ON AUGUST 25 REPORTED THAT VIRATA HAS SUGGESTED A TAX EQUIVALENT TO 15 PERCENT OF FARES, THROUGH EARLIER SCUTTLEBUTT SPECULATED ON A FIGURE OF 2,000, ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO THE PRESENT "UNOFFICIAL TAX." THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM IS HOLDING OUT FOR A 10,000 PESO BOND WHICH WILL BE REFUNDED UPON THE RETURN OF THE TRAVELLER. THIS WOULD NOT IMPEDE THE FREE TRAVEL OF FILIPINOS AND CONTINUE THE INDUCEMENT TO FOREIGN AIRLINES TO PUT ON ADDITIONAL FREQUENCIES.

5. IN THE MEANTIME, THE SITUATION REMAINS CONFUSED AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MANILA 13331 252353Z

FLUID, AND EVERYONE CONCERNED IS BIDDING HIS TIME, INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. IT AGAIN REFLECTS CONTEMPORARY DECISION-MAKING BY GOP PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHIFYING WITH THE BUREAUCRATS SCURRYING AROUND TO FILL IN THE DETAILS AFTERWARDS. U.S. AIRLINE OFFICIALS TELL US THAT THEIR PHONES HAVE BEEN RINGING CONSTANTLY.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Office:** ACTION EB  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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